Michigan Department of Human Services

Articles in Today's Clips

Thursday, October 2, 2008

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

Prepared by the DHS Office of Communications (517) 373-7394

*DHS cited in stories

Subject	Page
Abuse-neglect	2-4
Child support	5
Citizen engagement*	6-8
DHS miscellaneous	9
Domestic violence	10
Heating assistance*	11-12
Juvenile	13
Miscellaneous	14
Poverty	15-16
Refugee assistance*	17-18
News release*	19



Preliminary exam starts on teen accused of shaking baby daughter to death

Posted by Shannon Murphy | The Flint Journal October 01, 2008 16:21PM

FLINT, Michigan -- A preliminary examination began Wednesday for a teenager charged with shaking his 8-month-old daughter to death.

Flint police Sgt. J. Leigh Besson testified in Flint District Court that Paul D. Powell II, 17, first denied shaking his daughter, Takyra Rene Banks. But Powell later told Besson he shook Takyra because he grew frustrated with her crying.

The examination was adjourned until Oct. 9 so the medical examiner could testify. Investigators said Takyra died July 17 of injuries consistent with shaken baby syndrome.

Powell was charged with open murder, felony murder and first degree child abuse.

Powell's attorney, Major White, raised concerns that Powell spoke to police without his mother present. Powell was 16 when the incident occurred.

© 2008 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



Man, 43, charged in assault of 94-year-old woman in his care in Mundy Township

Posted by Shannon Murphy | The Flint Journal October 02, 2008 11:52AM

MUNDY TOWNSHIP, Michigan -- A 43-year-old man was charged Wednesday with sexually assaulting a 94-year-old woman in his care.

Police said Dale Adler was living with the woman in a rental home in the township and had power of attorney over her.

On Saturday, Adler took the woman to the hospital because she had an "altered level of consciousness," said Mundy Township Detective Michael Neering.

While at the hospital, medical staff determined she had sustained a head injury earlier in the week and had been sexually assaulted.

Adler was arrested Sunday and charged with criminal sexual conduct first degree and first-degree vulnerable adult abuse.

Adler is in the county jail on a \$95,000 cash bond.

Neering said the investigation into when the sexual assault occurred and what happened is continuing.

Police also are looking into how Adler met the woman and obtained power of attorney. Neering said he had been her caretaker for eight years.

The woman was in intensive care at the hospital for several days, but has since been released and transferred to an adult care facility, Neering said.

© 2008 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

Williamsburg man charged with child abuse

FROM STAFF REPORTS

October 02, 2008 12:00 am

TRAVERSE CITY -- A Williamsburg man faces a child abuse charge after he allegedly struck a toddler in the head several times.

Roger Wilco Winslow is charged with second-degree child abuse. A preliminary examination is set for Oct. 14.

A Michigan Department of Natural Resources conservation officer allegedly saw Winslow repeatedly strike a girl, 3, in the head near the Sand Lakes area in Whitewater Township, court records show. Winslow hit the girl in the head more than a dozen times, the officer said.

The officer said she also saw Winslow push the girl to the ground, pick her up by the shirt and shake her and then grab her by the hair and shake her head, records show.

Leelanau County Prosecutor Joe Hubbell will prosecute the case because Winslow is related to someone in the Grand Traverse County Prosecutor's office, Grand Traverse Prosecutor Alan Schneider said.

Copyright © 1999-2008 cnhi, inc.

COMMENTS | PRINT | EMAIL | MOBILE VIEW Michigan dad arrested in NH

Wednesday, Oct. 1, 2008

SALEM – A man wanted in Wisconsin for failing to pay child support was arrested Tuesday morning at the Park View Motel, police said.

Peyton Washburn, 42, of Royal Oak, Mich., is accused of owing \$25,000 in back child support.

On Monday, Washburn was arrested and charged with DWI. At the time of his arrest, Wisconsin authorities confirmed they had a warrant for him but said they would not extradite him. Yesterday, however, a Wisconsin district attorney's office called police to say they would extradite Washburn.

He appeared Tuesday in Plaistow District Court where he refused to waive extradition. He is being held on \$25,000 cash bail pending a probable cause hearing in Salem District Court.

PRINT | EMAIL | PAGE TOP | NH BLOGOSPHERE & EVENTS

All trademarks and copyrights on this page are owned by their respective owners. © 1997-2008.

THE ROMEO OBSERVER

Published at PO Box 96 124 W. St. Clair Romeo, MI 48065. Phone: (586)752-3524 Fax: (586)752-0548 Updated Wednesday, October 01, 2008 at 3 PM EST

FRONT PAGE

SPORTS

COMMUNITY

WHAT'S HAPPENING

CLASSIFIEDS



SEARCH

Search Stories
For

Find It!

OBITUARIES

RUTH JACKSON

Read More...

INSIDE

PUBLIC NOTICES

LINKS

ABOUT US

NEWSSTANDS

SUBSCRIPTIONS

EDITORIAL FORMS

ARCHIVES



Oct. 6 final day to register for Nov. 4 election

The last day to register for the general election on Nov. 4 is Monday, Oct. 6.

Those not registered to vote have several easy ways to accomplish it. To register, though, you must be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old by election day and a Michigan resident.

Michigan "motor/voter" registration is one of the easier ways to register to vote by visiting any Secretary of State branch office.

You can also register at any county, city or township office and one of several specified agencies including the Department of Human Services, the Department of Community Health, and the Michigan Jobs Commission. Military recruitment centers also provide voter registration services.

You may also register to vote by mail<forms are available at your local clerk's office or from the Secretary of State Web site. If you register to vote by mail, and you have moved to a new voting jurisdiction or are registering for the very first time, you must vote in person in the first election in which you participate. The only exceptions are if you are 60 years old or older, disabled as defined by law or temporarily living overseas.

NEWS SUMMARY

HEADLINES

School Board approves elementary fence lines

Local resident hired to conduct school survey

WBRW call-in show on Oct. 6

More details needed before camp approval

Harvest Days celebrates fall, benefits charities

Conservation
District seeking
candidates for two
4-year terms

Washington man creates new logo for township

What locals think about a 'Main Street bailout'

Washington Twp.
OKs hiring
additional
firefighters

Bruce Township fire still under



MICHIGAN REPORT

The Capitol Record Since 1906

REPORT NO. 189, VOLUME 47-- TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30 2008

LOCALS: VOTER REGISTRATION UP, EXPECT AN INCREASE IN VOTERS AT POLLS

While the state has yet to officially count the number of newly registered voters, local clerks around the state said on Tuesday that registration totals in their communities point to higher than average voter turnouts for this year's election.

The Department of State typically waits until after the 30-day deadline to register to vote in the election, which is October 6, to tally up the number of people who have added their names to the registry.

However, as city clerks see it, the get out the vote campaigns heavily pushed by both presidential campaigns and others will likely see significant success at the polls this November, with some areas such as in Grand Traverse County and the city of East Lansing expecting voter turnout as high as 80 percent.

Clerks are still hard at work processing last minute registrations, for example in Traverse City where they are in the midst this week of inputting "a stack" of applications after already adding 409 names to the rolls since the primary in August, amounting to 11,728 registered voters in the city as of mid-afternoon Tuesday.

East Lansing City Clerk Nicole Evans said she expects a significant turnout increase from the usual 60 percent or so to as much as 80 percent.

There are 34,000 registered voters in East Lansing up from 29,000 in early September.

Ann Arbor has had an even bigger increase in registered voters since the primary, going from 92,934 to 100,760, an increase of about 7,900 people.

In Grand Rapids, where the clerk said the turnout for large issue elections is usually around 69 percent, she expects an even higher showing this year from the 129,620 registered voters in that city.

In large part clerks said that there has been broad interest in this election because of a sense of what's at stake and, of course, because presidential races always attract more voters.

But some areas, such as in Sault St. Marie, local issues have become hot topics for debate.

In that city with about 9,300 registered voters, 300 more people have registered since the primary, in large part because of a race for a district court judicial post that hasn't been contested in some time.

To be sure, groups such as <u>Shut Up & Vote</u>, which is plastering the airwaves of southeastern Michigan this week with interviews and voting information, can also share credit for attracting some people to register to vote.

A child of Greater Media Detroit stations, the "shut up" campaign, which will air a slew of 60-second interviews throughout the week featuring people attached to both parties and many issues, is the first time the media group has reached out to its listeners who may not be traditionally hooked up with politics or what's happening in Lansing, said Phil Lewis from the Rossman Group, the Lansing firm that's helping get the word out about the campaign.

AFL-CIO MOBILIZING VOTERS IN STATE

The AFL-CIO is hoping 2008 will be its most successful year getting union members, and their friends and family, registered and to the polls in November. And like the presidential candidates have done, that means blitzing the state with top union leaders.

AFL-CIO National President John Sweeney was in Lansing Tuesday to rally the troops, his third trip to the state since the election began to heat up and he expected it would not be his last.

"No state is more important than the state of Michigan," Mr. Sweeney said at a gathering of campaign workers at the AFL's state headquarters.

And he said that could mean bringing in workers from other states to add to the voter registration and campaigning efforts. Union members would not be drafted for the effort, but he said Michigan would be a destination for those looking to work in another state, as would Ohio and Pennsylvania.

"Michigan's among the top unions (for political organizing)," he said.

And he said the added efforts this year appeared to be paying off at least in poll results. "I think we're probably going to have our best year in terms of voter turnout," he said. "And it's going to have an important impact on the election."

But the AFL-CIO is also working to spread the political activism to more of its member unions. "I will be trying to work and get greater response from some unions that have really not achieved their true potential," he said. "We just have to do our damnedest to raise the level of awareness."

Mr. Sweeney said the organizing would be the primary task of the AFL-CIO. Money for campaigns comes from the local unions, he said. "Our strength is mobilizing some of the groups like we have here," he said.

Free picnic, kind neighbors ease the pain for victims of recent flooding - Kalamazoo Gazette News Impa... Page 1 of 2



Free picnic, kind neighbors ease the pain for victims of recent flooding

Posted by Jeff Barr | Kalamazoo Gazette September 30, 2008 14:32PM

KALAMAZOO -- This time there was protection from the downpour.

Two large tents kept water from dousing the pulled-pork dinners provided by Buist Electric Inc., 3201 Lake St., for hundreds affected by the summer flooding. A deluge ensued, but the pork, baked beans and cole slaw stayed dry.

"Can you believe it's raining again?" asked Mike Westra, 68, whose home was heavily damaged during the flooding, forcing him to move across the street into his daughter's house. "Our wood floors are buckling, we've lost all our furniture, the house is unlivable."

So Mike and Suzanna Westra live on the other side of the street, with six others in a three-bedroom home, with a view of the ruined home that Suzanna Westra lived in for all of her 61 years. Thanks to Buist Electric, the Westra family and hundreds more enjoyed a respite from the flooding Monday night. Even in the rain.

Buist supplied 200 pounds of pork, 20 gallons of barbecue sauce, 175 pounds of baked beans, 300 pounds of potatoes, 60 pounds of shredded cabbage with 20 pounds of mayonnaise and 40 gallons of iced tea and lemonade.

HELP FOR FLOOD VICTIMS

- A good source of information for emergency relief for flood victims is the State Emergency Relief program offered through the Kalamazoo County Department of Human Services. Benefits include appliances, furniture, home repairs, relocation assistance, and help with heat and utility costs. For details, call 337-5000, go to the office at 322 E. Stockbridge Ave. or visit www.michigan.gov/dhs and click on "Assistance Programs," then "Emergency Services."
- The American Red Cross and Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 357 are helping the needlest flood victims by offering a program to provide and install water heaters. Beginning today, the Red Cross is considering only victims with "significant loss as determined by a home visit." Call 353-6180, visit www.greaterkzooredcross.org or go to the office at 5640 Venture Court, Kalamazoo.

Story text edited from original. See full text at blog address						

Every Woman's Place receives federal grant for housing program

Posted by <u>llupo</u> October 01, 2008 06:22AM

MUSKEGON COUNTY — Every Woman's Place Inc. has received a \$304,799 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to fund its transitional supportive housing program for victims of domestic abuse.

The three-year federal grant provides rent assistance to women who have fled abusive situations and are in need of temporary housing, said Christina Scarpino, the agency's director of development. The program provides rent assistance and other support, such as help finding jobs, for 21 individuals and their families for two years. When someone in the program finds a job or becomes self-sufficient, Scarpino said, that slot is filled with a new person.

"This Justice Department award enables us to provide safe housing and support services to women and children who otherwise may remain economically dependent upon their batterer," Susan Johnson, CEO of Every Woman's Place, said in a prepared statement.

Every Woman's Place, which includes an emergency shelter, is at 1221 W. Laketon. For more information about Every Woman's Place, call 759-7909.

Categories: Muskegon County

Comments

Footer



October 2, 2008

Area agencies prepare for high heating costs

State wins extra funding to help those in need

By JASON ALEXANDER Times Herald

Cold temperatures are on the way.

That means people will be turning up the heat in their homes, and with natural gas prices on the rise, that won't come without hefty charges.

"Rates could be 30% higher than last year," said Timothy Lubbers, spokesman for SEMCO Energy.

Still, there is some good news for people who might struggle to keep up with those high prices -- help is on the way.

U.S. Sens. Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin recently announced Michigan will receive an extra \$5,269,296 in emergency funding to help families pay the high cost of fuel this winter. The funding is part of the Department of Human Services' Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which helps pay the cost of heating and cooling bills for millions of low-income families, seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Some of the money probably will go to the St. Clair County Department of Human Services and the Economic Opportunity Committee of St. Clair County. The organizations have different funding sources as well as different guidelines by which people are qualified for assistance.

As the cost to heat homes has increased in recent years, so has the number of people who need help.

"It's amazing to see the number of people coming in," said Melinda Johnson, executive director of the Economic Opportunity Committee. "It's not the stereotype of what some would think coming in for help. All walks of life are coming in and needing help.

"It's stressful for the staff. The stories are so bad."

The money Johnson's agency receives comes from a variety of sources, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency; the Department of Human Service's program; the United Way; and the Michigan Public Service Commission. The group also raises its own money through fund-raisers such as the Walk for Warmth, scheduled for February.

People struggling to pay their heating bills should call the Department of Human Services for help first, Johnson said. If help isn't available there, people can turn to her agency. In the 2007 fiscal year, the Department of Human Services helped 1,563 households in St. Clair County, distributing \$571,795.

Colleen Steinman, spokeswoman for the state Department of Human Services, said assistance reached a record level last year in the state.

"We will have to wait and see what happens with the weather this winter. There is a lot of competition for dollars," she said. "Michigan is not the only state with these issues, but with the cold, cold winter here, we want to help as many people as the funding allows."

Lubbers, the SEMCO spokesman, said the worst thing people can do is wait until their bill adds up and their service is shut off.

"I always tell customers if they are struggling to pay the bill to call us sooner rather than later," Lubbers said. "Our options are limited if the bill adds up."

Teen ordered to juvenile facility on shooting incident

Posted by <u>llupo</u> September 30, 2008 23:43PM

MUSKEGON COUNTY -- A 16-year-old Muskegon youth has been ordered to be placed in a high-security juvenile residential facility after pleading no contest in the shooting of another teen.

Muskegon County Circuit Judge William C. Marietti, acting as a Family Court judge, last week ordered Lamonte Daniel Trotter of 39 Iona, Apartment 2, placed in the Wolverine Secure Treatment Center, a privately owned, locked treatment center in Saginaw. Marietti delayed imposition of a possible adult sentence, with Trotter's case to be reviewed every six months.

Trotter pleaded no contest to assault with intent to murder, assault with a dangerous weapon and two felony firearm counts. Police said he shot one teen and hit a second with a gun.

The two assaults occurred in July in the area of Third Street and Monroe Avenue, where a large group of mostly teens had gathered, according to Muskegon police.

The attempted murder and one gun conviction stemmed from the shooting of 18-year-old Antonio D. Keenan of Muskegon, who was hit in the mouth area by a bullet. Keenan was admitted to a local hospital.

The other assault and firearm convictions were for striking Keith Sanders, 18, of Muskegon, in the mouth with the gun after the shooting.

Categories: Muskegon County

Comments

autotech1780 says...

Iona street, huh? Ha ha.

Posted on 10/01/08 at 8:54PM Footer

PRESS & GUIDE

Vista Maria the site of 'United in Hope' event

DEARBORN HEIGHTS - Vista Maria, the largest private not-for-profit child welfare agency in Michigan, is celebrating its 125-year legacy of hope and recovery for disadvantaged children and their families.

This yearlong celebration will reunite generations of women through a series of events, beginning with the "United in Hope" open house at 1 p.m. Saturday on Vista Maria's campus in Dearborn Heights, featuring a campus tour, children's activities, alumni reunion and celebratory walk.

"Vista Maria has helped many women and families through difficult circumstances," said Cameron Hosner, president and chief executive officer of Vista Maria.

"We're not only celebrating the contributions of Vista Maria but the accomplishments of the girls who walked through our doors, applied themselves to treatment and triumphed over adversity."

Since taking in the first girl in 1883, Vista Maria has helped nearly 50,000 women and children. Vista Maria has evolved from an orphanage to a treatment center addressing the issues of trauma, mental health and substance abuse; to its current role as a community resource. Its specialized programs include:

Intensive Trauma Recovery Program — Designed to help adolescent girls cope with issues associated with abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Substance Abuse and Aggressive Behavior Program — Provides a variety of treatment methods to assist girls to help them overcome addictive and aggressive behavior, remain substance free and make healthy lifestyle choices.

General and Specialized Foster Care — Designed to provide case management services for children who have suffered abuse or neglect.

Youth Assistance Program — A 10-week course for at-risk middle school aged children and their families living in Dearborn Heights to improve social and conflict resolution skills and prevent behaviors that may lead to dropping out of high school.

Click here to return to story:

http://www.pressandguide.com/stories/100108/loc_20081001008.shtml



Grand Haven, Michigan





MRSA case confirmed at Lake Hills

Front Page News **Sports** Classifieds **Obituaries Police Entertainment Special Sections** Weather Blo

United Way assessment highlights poverty, diversity

Wed, Oct 1, 2008







BY BRIAN KEILEN

bkeilen@grandhaventribune.com

HUDSONVILLE — The number of Ottawa County children living in poverty has been consistently rising over the past few years, according to a new community assessment by the local United Way.



Click to enlarge

The organization revealed the results of the assessment — which they conduct every five years — at a luncheon in Hudsonville on Tuesday. The assessment provided statistics in areas from access to health care to community infrastructure.

Some areas in the assessment — such as financial stability — have been taking center stage, Greater Ottawa County United Way President Patrick Moran said.

"It's become the number-one issue on the radio and on the talk shows," he said.

SPORTS HEADLINES

- Koella, Bucs hold off **Panthers**
- Soccer: WMC in contention for league title
- SL tennis 1-1-1 at Allegan
- GH equestrian team enjoys banner season
- Grandville's Dood the top local Power Points player
- GHSC working with GHHS

Site Sponsor



LOCAL NEWS Headlines

- United Way assessment highlights poverty, diversity
- MRSA case confirmed at Lake Hills
- Allegan residents concerned with repairs for road where deadly washo hit in June

According to the assessment, approximately 7 percent of households in the county experienced a time in the past year when they did not have enough money to make their housing payment.

Moran also pointed out the desire of Ottawa County residents to live in diverse communities. Nearly 44.6 percent of non-white residents said it was "very important" to live in a community with wide diversity, compared to only 28.8 percent of white residents.

"We need to make sure we make diverse and inclusive neighborhoods a reality, not just something on paper," Moran said.

Finally, the need for care of older Ottawa County residents will grow in the coming years. Between 2000 and 2006, the number of residents 55 and older grew by 217 percent.

"We're going to grow by leaps and bounds there," Moran said. "And I don't think we're ready."

But most importantly, Moran said, the United Way wants to see how all the different aspects work together.

Seven "think tanks" comprised of more than 87 people were formed to complete the assessment.

The United Way has been implementing a new "Live United" philosophy over the past few months, and at their recent campaign kickoff and Day of Caring, volunteers wore T-shirts with the slogan — but it is more than that, Moran said.

"We want to make sure we initiate long-lasting change," he said. "It's more than just a cute T-shirt."



The page cannot be displayed

The nage you are looking for is currently unavailable. The Mah site

- Red pines could be eliminated from county parks
- Emergency siren test scheduled Friday
- Ex-prosecutor says she was sabotaged
- Births
- Fourth Wright Township fire victim identified
- New owner of SLT company plans expansion

POLICE BLOTTER

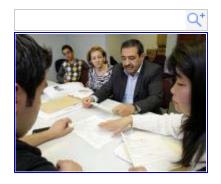
- Police: Wright fire victims were murdered
- California man sentenced on porn charges
- Bank hit by two robbers on same day
- Residential fire claims at least three lives
- Boy hurt after driving golf cart into traffic
- State police: UP driver kills toddler, flees
- Detroit infant shot dead in his sleep Sunday
- 8 inmates accused of using meth in jail

Arts/Entertainment

AP Breaking News Video

- Bailout Passes Senate, House Foes Soften
- Pilot's License Found in Calif. May Be Fossett's
- Biden, Palin Debate Highly Anticipated
- Federal Sweep Nets 1300 Gang Members
- Stocks End Relatively Calm Day With Modest Loss





Iraqi refugees Nafea Kaka, second from left, his wife Treza and son Sinan, 14, listen to their sponsor Frederick Yaldo, left, and Refugee Services office, Archdiocese of Detroit case worker Thu Ho, right, in Detroit, Wednesday, Oct. 1, 2008. Michigan is one of the nation's top destinations for Iraqi refugees, having received roughly a quarter of the more than 12,000 who have resettled in the U.S. since 2007. (AP Photo/Paul Sancya)



US policy change reduces flow of Iraqis to Mich.

By JEFF KAROUB - 4 hours ago

DETROIT (AP) — The U.S. government has been sending fewer Iraqis to Michigan because of its struggling economy, though some expect the refugees will make their way here anyway, costing the cash-strapped state more in the long run.

Michigan is one of the nation's top destinations for Iraqi refugees, having received about 3,000 of the 13,823 Iraqi refugees allowed into the country between Oct. 1, 2007, and Sept. 30, 2008, based on U.S.. State Department figures obtained by The Associated Press on Wednesday. Now the state only can take refugees who have a close relative such as a parent, child or sibling in the state.

The State Department's policy, which changed in late June from one that allowed entry to those with cousins and friends in the state, is expected to cut initial resettlement in Michigan by a third.

State (DHS) refugee coordinator Al Horn said he expects the shift to show up in resettlement numbers for September as the government processes the final family reunification cases approved before the policy change.

"What they did was they took the definition of family and narrowed it — if it's a close relative, you can go (to Michigan)," Horn said. "If they don't have that, they're looking for opportunities in other states. ... If another city or state has better, more prosperous economic and job prospects, the refugee would be able to go there and build a life."

But Horn and others say many who resettle elsewhere are expected eventually to make their way to the Detroit area, lured by the area's large Middle Eastern population as well as its social and cultural networks. In that case, State Department money for refugees and agencies would still flow to the state where they first resettled.

"If they move here, we have the person who needs the services," Horn said. "We get the same numbers. ... Plus, we don't get the money."

Michigan has had the nation's highest average annual jobless rate since 2006. The seasonally adjusted August jobless rate of 8.9 percent was the highest in the state since late 1992.

The State Department changed its policy after its representatives met earlier this year with nonprofit social service groups and local affiliates of national resettlement agencies. Workers cited strains as they coped with a rapid rise in health screenings, job placements and other services.

Refugee coordinators say they were told the restriction would be revisited next year.

The surge came after the Bush administration streamlined its admissions process under criticism for not doing enough for Iraqis who have fled their country since the 2003 U.S. invasion. Officials recently said 12,118 Iraqi refugees had arrived in the country since Oct. 1, 2007, and they would try to admit at least 17,000 next year.

Still, several agencies preferred a more open resettlement policy even as they acknowledged the increased load. They have boosted staff and are working more with other groups.

A State Department spokesman, who spoke on the condition of anonymity as a policy, said the decision to restrict eligibility was made with support from refugee agencies in an effort to ease burdens on both the front-line workers as well as the overall community.

He said that while officials cannot force refugees to stay somewhere, the payments don't transfer because the department encourages people to live throughout the country.

Local refugee coordinators say they shared their concerns about refugees who eventually resettle in the Detroit area.

"I even told them, they are going to come back here no matter what," said Rafat Ita,

senior refugee specialist with Lutheran Social Services of Michigan.

Ita said one of his clients is a mother of three whose husband was killed by "friendly fire" by the U.S. Army. Rawaa Bahoo, 28, was sent to Atlanta in July but now lives with her brother-in-law in the Detroit area.

"Here's this single mom, she doesn't have a clue of the system in the U.S.," Ita said. "Her brother-in-law drove down to get her, and she spent only one night there. She lost her benefits but she's here."

Dia Behnam, speaking through an interpreter, said his sister-in-law was upset she couldn't come first to Detroit. He is her only family in the U.S. and pays her bills while she seeks assistance from the state of Michigan.

Sister Beth Murphy of the Archdiocese of Detroit said she understands all sides of the issue but also supports the State Department's decision. Her agency resettled about 340 Iraqi refugees in 2007, and expects it will exceed 1,000 this year.

"It's not a capacity issue for us," she said. "But our concern is the capacity of the economy in southeast Michigan to easily absorb the refugees who are coming."

Both Murphy and Joseph Kassab, executive director of the Chaldean Federation of America, said one major challenge for refugees is transportation. Cars are hard to afford but vital in an area without a regional system of light rail and commuter trains.

Kassab said his group is developing a program for refugees to buy cars with long-term loans. But the organization offers many forms of humanitarian aid, such as housing and job assistance.

"When they come to Detroit, even if they cannot work for (General Motors Corp.), our people own businesses. We can connect them with community members."



Copyright © 2008 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Michigan Department of Human Services News Release

Contact: Edward Woods III, communications director, (517) 373-7394 or (517) 927-1884

DHS Director Ahmed invites Genesee County residents to reduce poverty and promote economic opportunities for all

Sept. 30, 2008

FLINT -- Michigan Department of Human Services Director Ismael Ahmed today formally invited regional human services organizations and residents here to join efforts to reduce poverty and maximize economic opportunities for all Michigan citizens by attending the 2008 Voices for Action Poverty Summit in Detroit on Nov. 13.

"Too many families are just one paycheck away from sliding into poverty," Ahmed said. "More than half a million children in this state live in poverty. It's a national issue that affects one in five people including citizens all over Michigan. This poverty reduction summit will bring together leaders from across our state to identify strategies to enhance efforts already underway."

The day-long summit on Nov. 13 kicks off a statewide initiative that builds on Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm's existing efforts to create jobs, strengthen education and expand access to health care, college and job training by using regional teams to focus resources on the area's most pressing issues. Granholm and Martin Luther King III will keynote the summit, which also offers breakout sessions focusing on work and employment, education, health care and housing.

Ahmed joined DHS staff, community residents and regional partners from Flints Baker College and the One Stop Housing Resource Center at a media roundtable at the One Stop Housing Resource Center, 303 W. Water St., to talk about how Michigan families and individuals are finding creative solutions to these challenging economic times.

"Michigan's efforts to reduce poverty and maximize economic opportunity will help achieve the national goal of reducing poverty by 50 percent in the next decade," Ahmed said. "We know that a state effort combined with regional solutions and committed, caring people can make all the difference."

For more information, please visit the DHS Web site at www.michigan.gov/dhs or www.michigan.gov/poverty